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## **Sen. Allen sponsors legislation addressing water quality issues** *Bill in response to St. Mary's River pollution*

**LANSING** – State Sen. Jason Allen, R- Traverse City, introduced legislation Thursday to help future responses to sewage and other toxic spills from Canada.

“Water quality is a top priority in Michigan,” Allen said. “Water is our greatest resource across the state and we must do everything in our power to protect and preserve this asset for the safety and enjoyment of all our residents and tourists.”

Senate Bill 1448 would establish a council charged with addressing water quality issues that cross state and international jurisdictional boundaries.

Allen’s legislation proposes that the council be comprised of environmental and public health officials from state and local governments and Canadian provinces.

The council would be charged with researching and making recommendations for appropriate public policy measures to address cross-jurisdictional water quality issues, such as sewage overflows and water quality monitoring, among other things.

The legislation is in response to situations in the state where sewage or other toxic spills have washed ashore from Canada. This past summer in Chippewa County, which Allen represents, Sugar Island residents endured many weeks of raw sewage which washed onto their beaches from a neighboring Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario septic treatment facility.

Many area residents expressed concern about the speed and effectiveness of the governmental response to the spills.

“When pollution crosses jurisdictional boundaries, the layers of governmental bureaucracy involved multiply exponentially,” Allen said. “Our experiences over the summer have shown a definite need for a coordinated plan. Hopefully bringing all of the stakeholders to the table will be the first step in developing a process to identify and resolve future problems.”

SB 1448 was referred to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources & Environmental Affairs.

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